

Pastor Jordan Gades Sermon, Sept 16,2018, Gen 12:1-9

For the entire month of September we are running this extra mile mission of the Gift of Hope; First Lutheran Children youth and family ministries. And I think that is a great place to start today for a message. Hope.

If we look through the bible up to this point, a lot has happened but also not so much. There really isn't a plethora of hope present either

We are only a few chapters into genesis and we've already seen creation and the fall. We've seen the generations rise and the effects of sin come upon them, especially with Cain and able. And then there's flood with Noah and then the tower of Babel. Then Abram. A bram starts the 6th story in the bible. And in 4 out of the previous 5 we got to hear how screwed up and screwed humanity is without God.

Abram story is a strange one when you think about it. Guy hears God calling him, didn't expect it, didn't ask for it. And yet God Called Abram out of all the people on the earth.

One question that we never ask ourselves is "Did he need this promise or blessing?" Seems like he's doing ok. Married, lots of possessions and livestock. Has a big household full of servants. He seems blessed already. But it's also important to remember that Abram is living in the same world that we are living in. he is Still in need of God interceding in his life. He lived in a world surrounded by sin and strife. Pain and anguish and death and destruction. He had seen it all and was now seemingly near the end of his life. 75 years old and still in need of something, something that he has been hoping for his entire life but was never given.

So the answer of did Abram need this promise of blessing from God is an obvious yes.

The incredible need that Abram is hoping for, this hope that God ends up giving him is spelled out the reader if you know a little Hebrew.

Abram means "Great father". 75 years of being call great father and never having a child. Here we meet a fatherless man hearing the promise of a blessing that he was named for.

But here out of irony is born Hope for the future for Abram. And not just slight hope, some crazy wild abundant hope is born anew.

How many people do you think knew about Abraham's long hope of being a father? We don't know. But God knew. God knew the exact words that

were written deep on Abraham's heart. Knew the one blessing that would drive his call, move him from safety and prosperity in Babylon to living in tents in the wilderness.

God changes Abrams name to Abraham - Great father to Father of many

- Hope for us - Same blessing/promises as Abraham and now the hope of Jesus Christ
- Hope when we need it
 - Deaths in the community - dick hakes, bob hytinen
 - Cancer and illness
 - Depression and mental illness are here. There is such stigma.

Aitkin County recently started CAPS, I've been fortunate enough to attend a couple of these early planning sessions - Aitkin Area Study -

We talk about death and hunger and other types of illness but we don't talk about the problem, we don't acknowledge the problem. We don't have leaders who know much about the issue or will acknowledge the issue. But that's starting to change now. We are going to moving to break the stigma about these illnesses.

We don't build those relationships that allow us to open up to each other for no reason. Small town of Aitkin MN, everyone knows everyone and everything except for all those people who just feel alone and desperately without hope.

We are the givers of hope. Each and every one of us. We give hope because we have been given hope. We have been given new life.

So often we know that someone is in need of hope. But so often we don't know what to say. But it is our call to bless that person and rely on God to help us.

- How God gives us hope and how we give hope
 - Caps Comm Meal
 - Sunday GIG, Wednesday GIG
 - Bringing us together so that we can be together as a people of Hope. The outside world does not live like that. We Hope in our God who blesses and promises. We Hope in our Lord who has never broken his promise to be there with us. We spread this hope because it is alive in us.
Amen